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Toleration
AND
LIBERTY
OF
CONSCIENCE
Considered ,

AND
Proved Impracticable , Impossible ,

And, even in the

OPINION
OF
DISSENTERS,
Sinful and Unlawful.

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Toleration AND LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE Considered, &c.

IT might reasonably have been hoped that a Cause, so often baffled, so disowned by Heaven, so abandoned by all good men; so forsaken of Reason, so confounded by Guilt, and as apparently dismal in future Consequences, as it hath been fatal to these Nations in former Effects, might at last have been contented to lie buried under the Ashes of those Ruins it had raised, as Monuments of its Eternal Infamy to all future Ages; however it had been but an indifferent and obvious sort of Prudence for the Faction of Dissenters to

have laid their Fingers upon their Mouths, and by sleeping to have dissembled a kind of Death, till the Good Nature of the Government had, according to that frequent Experience which they have so often abused, passed another Free and General Pardon in favour of them; and truly to begin thus to run upon Tick for Pardons, before the Old, and the late New contracted Debts of the Faction had been compounded for, is a thing of such Extraordinary Confidence, that one may well fear they will not find Publick Faith enough at this time of the day to give them Credit. And It may perhaps raise a Dispute, whether this Religious Tooth-ach, which is always either so raging, as to put the State into a Fever, or upon the application of gentle Remedies, so stubbornly importunate, as to put the Government to continual pain, and not to permit it any Repose, may not tempt the trying the last Experiments of Severity upon the Disease, and removing the Hollow Tooth to preserve the rest from being tainted with its Poison?

I confess I could scarcely have believed it had been possible to have found a Pen so bold, as to demand Liberty and Toleration to carry on New Associations, Exclusions, and *Rye-House Assassinations*, or *New-market Murders*: But I see nothing is impossible! And whatever fluttering pretences are made, that it is purely Religious Liberty only that is desired; there is nothing more transparently clear, even to the least discerning Eye. Than that this Religious Liberty, which the Innocent of the Faction, if such there be, are put upon clamouring, petitioning, begging, or intreating for, is designed and intended, if it can be gained, by
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the more Politick Heads of the Faction, as the Foundation of all their future Designs of subverting the Government. Give them but this Spot to fix their Engine upon, and, like *Archimedes*, they will not doubt, from the former Experience they have had of it, but that they shall be able to remove the Earth from off its Centre, and the Government with Ease from off its Hinges. And in Effect he that begs for Toleration of all Opinions and Sects, in how purely Spiritual a Sense soever, only desires to have so many Barrels of Gunpowder to be ready to clap under the Government, and to hold the Lenstock with the lighted Match in his hand: And then the Capitulation will be very short. Gentlemen of the Government, Will you please to dismount? Good Mr. Monarchy, Does it please you to give way to the Commonwealth? If not, look you, here are so many Barrels of Tender Conscience ready, upon the touch, to take fire; so that here's but this Choice, To comply, or perish. This we have seen, this I hope we never shall see again. We have seen Good King *Charles* the First, and the Government Civil and Ecclesiastical thus beset with these Demands, with these Threatnings from the Men of Conscience. We have seen the Fatal Blow given, which hath amazed the whole Earth. We have seen the Government blown into the Air, and shattered into a thousand pieces by this Spiritual Gun-powder. We have seen the Mine so happily discovered, which should at once have buried the Merciful *Charles*, the Glorious *James*; our now most August and Gracious Sovereign, our Laws, Liberties, Religion and Government; and all filled with the same Materials,

Materials, all wrought with the same hands, and just ready for the same dreadful Execution. It is a strange thing that these men will not allow us the Wit, which we have bought so dear, and that, if the burnt Child dreads the Fire, they should think us so below that Sucking Policy, as to permit them, not only to raise the same Combustions and Flames, but that we must be such stark Fools to leap into them upon their intreaties and Perswasions that we shan't be hurt or burnt; and yet all this must happen to us again upon a Toleration, or else all the Wise Men of the Nation, except those of the Faction, are extremely deceived in the Measures of Computation, and Conjectures concerning future Events, for all that I have ever heard discourse or ever have seen write their Thoughts upon this Subject do agree with a *Nemine contradicente* in this great Truth; *That the Granting of Toleration to Dissenters, is the most certain Expedient to Ruin the Government.*

I cannot indeed wonder that the Dissenting Party should now pray for the taking off the Penal Laws; who not long ago ran bellowing up and down the Streets, with those furious Votes which the late Conspirators had made to that Purpose, and Insolently threatened Vengeance to such honest Ministers of Justice, who not believing that the Imperfect Breath of a Vote was a sufficient Repeal to the Royal Sanction of a Law, durst discharge their Duty and their Conscience in putting them in Execution: But I am, I confess, more than commonly surprized to see the Faction humbly offering their Politick Considerations to a Parliament, whose Genius, without consulting
Astrology,

Astrology, a man may presume to guess will not be very inclinable to Repeal any Laws so absolutely necessary to the safety of the King's Person, the Succession of his Royal House, and the Peace and Security of the Government, but who will rather imploy their Zeal and Wisdom, their Diligence and Industry, for the Future, to put it out of the Power of ill Men to shake the Crown, or disturb the Common Peace and Tranquillity of the Nation, by putting ill Men out of all manner of Power, Trust, and Capacity of influencing Publique Councils, and countenancing, by any abused Authority, Faction Principles and Disloyal Practices, though never so cunningly trick'd up in the Habit of Conscience, and Dress of Religion. But certainly it is the most affronting Confidence in the World, That these Dissenting People should presume to ground their Hopes upon his Present Majesty's Bounty and Clemency. And I doubt not but the King, who is as an Angel of God, may answer them with the same Reason and Wisdom as Solomon did his Foolish begging Brother; *Let him ask the Kingdom also*; Let them ask his Imperial Crown and Royal Scepter, it is but doing it by a Stratagem and Artifice: Nor is it difficult to believe that they, who made it so Unanimous a point of Conscience and Religion, as to a single Man, to be United in the Expediency and absolute Necessity of Excluding *James Duke of York, Albany, and Ulster*, from succeeding to the Imperial Crown of this Realm, would be much tenderer towards *James the Second*, by the Grace of God King of *England, &c.* And I believe it is not possible to find that Dissenter in all his Majesty's

jessie's Dominions, who was not actually either engaged in promoting, petitioning, and addressing for that fatal Bill, which must have been the last Will and Testament of the Hereditary Monarchy; or at least, who was not aiding, abetting, consenting to it, desirous of it, and to their Power assisting those that did with such violence prosecute it. Nay I dare not excuse even the *Lea* and *Nay Men*; for however they now pretend their hearts were Right, I have seen both in City and Country, Zealous Shoals of them post to give their Free Votes to such Men, as they knew were Exclusioners, and of the first Rate too. Nor have these People by any Signal Act of good Behaviour made it appear, That they love his Majesty, ever a jot the better for his being King, than they did whilst he was Duke. And I wonder in my heart what they must think of the King who treat him at this Rate; as if the ready way to step into his Royal Favour were to be his Enemy; or as if it were the best Maxim of Government to disoblige his best Friends and give them up for a Booty and a Prey to his Worst Enemies. I confess his Charity and Clemency must at that rate far Exceed that of his Royal Brother, to whom the Ingratitude of those, upon whom it was conferr'd, made even his Mercy so disadvantageous as to have wanted but little of proving his Ruin, and verifying the Character which *Shaftsbury* in a good humour gave of him, That he had the Royal Vertue of Mercy, even to a Fault. But what ever thoughts these People have of the Falseness of the King or the Inclineness of the Ensuing Parliament to give them Toleration, I meet with a great many of his best Subjects, who are of a
far

far different Opinion, and who think far more honorably of the Wisdom of their Prince and the Discretion of the Parliament in this Particular, and who believe neither the one nor the other will be induced to make a third Experiment of Dissenters Loyalty.

It seems however, that they have some very warm hopes about their hearts; and truly herein they appear very Sanguine in thinking or believing, That though they have been such Zealous Exclusioners; yet they themselves are not to be excluded from the Right which they pretend to have to Toleration and Liberty of Conscience. But among all their Considerations, had they added another, to make the Ten Eleven, *That Merits and good Services are the true Foundation of the Bounty and Indulgence of Wise Princes*, I am afraid they would have found their whole Party so slenderly stock'd with that preparing Ingredient for a rational Hope, that they might e'en have spared the other ten. But if men will hope against Reason, they must be contented to sit down with Disappointment, which is the natural Effect of that pleasing Flattery.

But it seems they believe they have reason, and not only so, but unanswerable Right for their Hopes, and therefore they have recommended them to us under Ten Considerations, which with their good leave we will take the Liberty to consider of. For truly, to me they seem only to have considered on one side; whereas Toleration is a Matter of that important Moment, that it deserves to be considered of again and again.

and possibly may require not only second, but third and fourth Thoughts of the Wise Men, before they come into the belief of the bare Expediency, much less the Conveniency and Necessity of it.

But before I enter upon that Matter, I cannot omit one Passage in the Epistle Dedicatory, preceeding the Considerations moving to Toleration; where the Author tells us, *That the only Argument against it, is a Clamorous pretence of its danger to the Government; and that Republick Machinations, and poisonous Designs have, or may be hatcht under Liberty of Conscience. For that there have and may be again those Atheistical and Diabolical Persons, who villainously, under the Veil of Religion, play the blackest Hypocrites, and carry on their own ambitious and damnable Intrigues under that Golden Vizard.* But, adds he, *Is that a sufficient Plea to justify those, whose utmost aim is the Innocent Worship of God, untainted with any such disloyal Thoughts, should be fined, harass'd, imprisoned, beggar'd and ruin'd as such? If the Government has had Experience of those Antimonarchical Principles, undoubtedly that Experience hath given it Discretion enough to prevent the Future Effects of them, and to distinguish betwixt the Guilty and the Innocent. Let every Judas therefore have his Judas Fate, &c.* Now from hence there arise many things worthy of our Consideration. First, We may consider how gently our Epistler handles the most loud and clamorous, the most flagitious Conspiracy, Treason and Rebellion, that ever the Sun saw, with calling it a *Clamorous pretence of Danger*, that may be, or has been to the Government.

Government. We have a very fine time on't indeed, if so much Blood and Treasure, so much Sacrilege, and so many unexampled Crimes must now amount to no more than Pretences; the overthrowing the Government, the Murder of the Sacred Person of the King, the Desolation of the Church; are these only Pretences? I took them always for most real, as well as monstrous Matters of Fact, and they who felt them, knew them to be such, and knew from whose hands they received those dismal Wounds; even from the Gentle, Easie, Peaceable Dissenters: Nor will it avail to call them Atheistical and Diabolical Traitors, since they were then reputed Saints, even by those men, who now call themselves so, and who could never yet be perswaded to abandon that Eternal Principle of Rebellion, or swallow the Test intended to correct that Poyson, nor ever be brought to assent and consent, *That it is unlawful for Subjects, upon any pretence whatsoever, to take up Arms against the King, or those Commissioned by him.* In the next place it deserves our consideration, how Traitors, that have the misfortune not to succeed, come to be Atheistical and Diabolical Hypocrites; and how free our Dedicator is, *To have every Judas have Judas his Reward,*
which

which truly is a more severe Sentence than he imagines, if every man, who hath endeavoured by Republick Machinations, and poisonous Designs, hatcht under Liberty of Conscience, deserves the Reward of *Judas, and the Wisdom of the Nation and Government*, as he exhorts, *Take care to see it executed*. I am apt to believe no great number of those, for whom he pleads, will appear so Innocent even within these few Years, but that they will be in more or less danger of his Sentence^l, and will stand in need of a Free and General Pardon to excuse them from it. But here is the Cunning Artifice of the Party, when for Overt Acts of Treason, Justice hath singled out the detected Criminals from the Herd, they treat them as Deer will do their hunted Companions, push them out, and offer them as a Sacrifice to the offended Government; then they are *Atheistical and Diabolical, the blackest Hypocrites, who carry on their own ambitious and damnable Intrigues under the Golden Vizor of Conscience*; and then you must believe that all the rest, who have had either the Wit or good Fortune, or rather who have wanted Wit to be trusted with the great Secret, must be celebrated for such, *whose utmost aim is the Innocent Worship of God, untainted*

tainted with any Disloyal Thoughts. So that aiding, assisting, abetting, comforting and relieving Traitors and Conspirators, promising to stand by them with Life and Fortunes, are no ways Criminal, or the least blemish to a Dissenter's Innocence, or untainted Loyalty.

But then comes a Master-piece of Art to be considered, which indeed surpasseth all that ever went before, or ever shall come after our Dedicator, when he tells us, *If the Government has had Experience of those Antimonarchical Principles, undoubtedly that Experience hath given it Discretion enough to prevent the future Effects of them, and to distinguish between the Guilty and the Innocent,* which is as well argued, as if I should say, The World hath had Experience of thousands that have been kill'd by Poison mingled with their Food; therefore undoubtedly that Experience hath taught mankind Discretion enough to prevent the future Effects of those Poisons, and to distinguish between them and wholesome Food. Whereas all the difficulty in both Cases is to distinguish; and the way to prevent the future Effects is to avoid that which they know hath been mortal Poison to others. Now the Wisdom of the Government hath believed, notwithstanding our
Dedicator's

Dedicator's *Undoubtedly*, that it is absolutely impossible to distinguish the Innocent from the Guilty, and that the safest way to prevent future Effects and Dangers, is by Coercive Laws to keep the Poison from spreading, by denying this false Liberty of Conscience and Toleration, which by Experience they have found so fatal to the Government: This is the only Discretion this sad Experience hath given the Government for Prevention; and this is the only thing our Dedicator would have them part with; a very kind Gentleman truly, who doubts not but they have Discretion; but indeavours to cully them out of it, and to leave them nothing but the Empty and Flattering Name of Wisdom. For let him talk till the World's End, he will find it so impossible for the Government to have that Discretion of discerning the Innocent from the Guilty, that even the most Innocent may not be able to discover it themselves. *Nemo repente fit turpissimus*; there are certain steps by which men, who were in their own Esteem and of the World most Innocent, come gradually to descend to the most infernal Wickednesses; and truly Liberty of Conscience seems to open the black Gate to that dreadful Descent.

With

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With what Indignation did *Hazael* repartee to the Weeping Prophet, who told him what inhumane Tragedies he should Act, *Am I a Dog?* Can any Man believe that the late horrid Rebels and Regicides, at the first Step of their Conscientious Rebellion, had the Kings Murder in their Eye, and the utter Subversion of the Government in their Thoughts? Truly it is not probable; but when once their Hand was in, and their Consciences got loose from the Laws, they knew not where to stop. Could a Man judge by their Words and Pretences, they were the most Innocent People upon the Earth; but how were they mistaken when it came to Trial? Nor is it possible for any Humane Power to discover whether the present Pretenders to Innocence are not just such Men: and therefore much more agreeable to Prudence, to protect the Government by suspecting the worst, than expose it to the same Dangers by an easie Credulity, so liable to be mistaken, and so ruinous if it be.

But to put this Matter out of dispute, our Dedicatör will do himself, the Dissenters, and the Government the greatest kindness imaginable, if he will but for once be so obliging, to let this infallible way of discovering the Innocent from the Guilty be made Publick; and since it is so Easie, as that he tells us, undoubtedly the Government knows how to do it, me thinks he will be very hard-hearted if he denies it; for undoubtedly it is not yet known to any but himself; and I dare engage he may have a

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Patent as the first Discoverer; and, which is worth all, without any of the ten Considerations, move the Government more effectually to spare the Innocent, than all the Wickedness of the Guilty have provoked it to punish them. But I fear I have mistaken the Dedicator, and that there lies a cunning Equivocation in the Belly of his *Distinguishing betwixt the Innocent and the Guilty*; and that his meaning is, all are Innocent who are not actually discovered to be Judases and Traytors, so that the Government in good Discretion ought not to prevent Mens coming to the Gallows by moderate Punishments, but only hang them if they be not strong enough to overthrow it, and yet will be attempting against the Government. Just as if it were an Indiscretion to whip a Fellow for Petit-Larceny, or Shop-lifting, and let him alone till he grows a notable Felon, and worth the hanging. Whereas it hath ever been thought the greatest Wisdom in Government, to crush the Beginnings of Mischiefs; *Principis obsta* having ever held a good Rank in the Politicks of the World. Now to distinguish in this sense between the Innocent and Guilty, is what the Government wisely intends; and thinking those whose Principles are dangerous, and have been found so by Experience, remotely guilty, it endeavours by Penalties and Restrictions to keep them from doing Hurt to themselves and others: and if some who are as to Acts, and possibly Intentions, Innocent, as it were in the midst of Contagion do suffer, till it is possible to distinguish and know them from those who

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who are Guilty either secretly, actually, or intentionally, they must remember the Fable of the *Stork* taken among the *Cranes*, and be contented to suffer in ill Company, since they cannot be perswaded to forsake it.

I have but a word to add to the Dedicator, and that is concerning a passage where he taxes the Government with the highest injustice for *fining, harassing, &c?* those who only innocently aim at the *Worshipping of God, as such*; which is one of the most false and malicious Scandals in the World, charged upon the Government: if it were true, the Government were the most Tyrannical, Unjust, and Cruel; but as it is notoriously false, the Calumniator is most intolerable; and that it is false, is most apparent, there being no Law which directs or inflicts a Penalty upon Dissenters, but shews the reason and occasion of its rise and severity, the securing the publick Peace of the Kingdom, from the Dangers which by former experience have been known to take their original from these pretences and Pretenders to Conscience and Religion, and not for their Innocent aiming only at the Worship of God, or as such Innocents as he would make them.

I now come to consider of the Considerations moving to Toleration, which I will endeavour to do with all Truth and shortness. The First is, *That it is not the Will of God to appoint forcible Ways or*
C 2 *Courses*

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Courses to bring men to conform to his Worship. Now this is apparently false. For, First, it is plain, that God would have all men to be saved, and to come to the Knowledge of the Truth. Now how God would have this Will of his effected, is best known by his own Methods; he entreats, he beseeches by his Ambassadors, he does good all ways, by long Suffering he indeavours to lead men to Repentance, he threatens, if men will not turn, he will whet his Sword and bend his Bow, he punishes the obstinate and incorrigible visibly many times in this World, and will hereafter in Flaming Fire take vengeance on those that know not God, and obey not the Gospel. Are not these Rewards and Punishments? Are not these the most compulsive Methods imaginable? Shall we accuse God, and say, he leaves any thing unattempted to save Sinners? For this Cause many are sick and weak, saith *St. Paul*. For these things the Wrath of God cometh upon the Children of Disobedience. Are these only gentle Invitations, or the severe Terrors of the Lord? And yet it is Gods will that these should be made use of, and that his Ambassadors should not only intreat and seek Peace, but threaten War, that where Love cannot, Fear may compel men to be Religious. It is true, God hath not put the Temporal Sword into the hands of the Church, he is the God of Order, and not Confusion; but he hath vested the Temporal Magistrate with a Temporal Sword, which he bears not in Vain, but is to be a Terror to Evil doers, as well as an Incourager of

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of them that do well. Sure the commanding, the injoyning, the obliging men to be Religious, is within his Commission; and the punishing the Impious and Irreligious comes within the reach of that Sword, which is not to be disobeyed under pain of Damnation. What God hath commanded, the Magistrate may see performed; what God hath prohibited, he may also prohibit: and his Power will signifie nothing, he will bear the Sword in vain, if it has no Edge, if he may not punish. Nay, there can be no Order, no Government in the World, if in indifferent things the Magistrate hath not power to impose what is most conducive to the Peace and Happiness of his People, and to punish those who disobey his Laws, and plead Exemption from his Power, as every Dissenter does who pleads for Liberty of Conscience. So that it is plain, the first Consideration, and its Consequences, are false; and they who will Arraign the Magistrate of Injustice for using a Coercive Power in punishing Evil doers, as all irreligious Persons are, do in effect arraign him by whom Kings Reign; and truly they who at their first step dare so boldly undertake, what is, and what is not the Will of God, contrary to his Revealed Will, and visible Methods of propagating Religion, by Punishments as well as Invitations, by Judgment as well as Mercy, may be suppos'd either very ignorant, or very boldly impious.

Nor is the second Consideration much better, or much Truer; *That outward Compulsion in matters of Conscience*

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Conscience can only serve to make men Hypocrites; if Men conform to any Worship, or way thereof, with an unwilling mind, they cannot serve God aright, though the Worship be Right, because the heart of the Worshipper is not right, &c. Can outward Compulsion only make Men Hypocrites, though the Worship they are compelled to, be Right? This is a severe Sentence, and I fear carries more in it then the Considerer intended; For first, I take it for granted, that there is more or less of compulsion, in bringing all men to Religion; for Religion is not in corrupted Nature, but is superinduced upon it, by strong and violent Compulsions of the Mind, by the Fears of Evil, or Desires of Happiness; and Compulsion is Compulsion still, let it come from God or Men, from Love or Fear, from my own Mind, or the Magistrates Power; so that bring this into a Logical Argument, and it concludes thus.

All Compulsion in Religion can only serve to make Men Hypocrites.

But all Men are compelled by something or other, to be Religious.

Therefore, all Religious Men are Hypocrites, nay, even though compelled to perform a Right Worship. Sure this is most Horrible, as well as most False. And secondly, our Considerers only, that compulsion can only serve to make Men Hypocrites, is a most barbarous,

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barous, as well as False Restriction. I have a Lewd Negro, who was bred an Idolater, I must not compel him to go to Church, for fear I *only* make him a Hypocrite. Oh uncharitable! I have a Careless, Ignorant, Wicked Servant, who had rather Drink and Play, than go to Divine Service; I must let him alone, it can *only* serve to make him a Hypocrite! Yes sure, it may serve for some better End; It may serve to open his Eyes; it may serve to enlighten his Mind; it may serve to affect his Will, to move his Affections, to correct his Errours, and at last to save both the Body and Soul of the Idolater and Profane. And I doubt not, but many Dissenters have already found advantage, by coming even by compulsion to our Churches, and hope more will, than barely the saving their Purse, and turning Hypocrites. But it is either some Mens Ignorance, or Malice, to endeavour to stop Men from gaining a true Information of their Judgments; and if they can but talk against Compulsion, and for Liberty of Conscience, and keep their mislead Proselytes from coming to understand their Duty, Interest, and Happiness, here and Eternally, by Disobedience to those whom God hath appointed to watch over their Souls, and commanded them to obey them, they think themselves Mighty Men, and Men of Renown; and yet at the same time that they would not have Men compelled to go to Church, they compell them by the most terrible Menaces, of Eternal Damnation, to keep out of our Churches, and will not permit them so much as to hear the kind Invitations of the Heavenly

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venly Ambassadors, who are sent to negotiate Peace and good will among Men, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God. So that it seems, Men may be compelled not to hear, but they must not be compelled to hear, though Faith comes by hearing, and they who are to be heard, are the Preachers, and those Preachers are to be sent, and not to run upon their own Heads, as the Teachers of Dissenters do, without either Mission Extraordinary by the attestation of Miracles, or Ordinary by Succession from Christ and his Apostles.

The third Consideration tells us, *All sorts of Persons are for Liberty of Conscience for themselves, even those that are most imposing upon others; and why should not the Church-Prottestants make the Presbyterians, the Independents, the Papists Case their own in this Point, and do to others what they would Men should do unto them?*

This Consideration is also unconcluding, unless he had said, All Persons, *Presbyterians, Independents, Papists*, who are for Liberty of Conscience for themselves, are also for allowing it to others; and why should not the Church-Prottestants? For if *Presbyterians &c.* be for denying Liberty of Conscience to others, when they are in Power, where is the Injustice in the Church-Prottestants for doing the same thing?

And

And wherein do they more transgress the Golden Rule, of doing to others as they would they should do unto them? But the *Presbyterians*, *Independents*, &c. if we may believe their Oracles, think it not only unlawful, but damnable to allow of Toleration of all Sects and Opinions. They who will read Sir Roger L'Estrange his *Dissenters Sayings*, may soon see what Opinion *Presbyterians* have of Toleration. *Edwards*, a *Presbyterian*; A Toleration is against the Nature of Reformation. *Case, It is, Fight God, fight Devil, fight Christ, fight Antichrist, catch that catch can*; Part 1st. Sect. 1st. of Toleration. Toleration; hath all Errors in it, and all Evils. *Edwards*; Liberty in all matters of Worship and Faith, is the open and apparent way to set up Popery. *Baxters*; A Butchering of Souls, a Shop of Poison for all men to buy and take that will; *Idem*. That which *Independents* deny in *New England*, they should not ask for here in *Old England*, *Dissenters Sayings*; Part 2d. Sect. 1st. of Toleration. I might instance in a thousand more, both from the Collection of that excellent person, and others; but I need not prove the Sun shines at high noon. Nor is it a breach of that admirable Rule, in all cases to deny that to others which we would not be denied. A Judge upon the Bench condemns the Criminal; the Criminal argues, My Lord, If you were in my place, would you desire to be thus dealt with, and be condemned? My Lord, do not transgress the Excellent Rule; Do to others as you would be done by: For this is the Law and the Prophets. And yet I believe no man from hence will infer, That the Judge ought not to condemn the Criminal.

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And

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And the case is plain, We deny this Liberty, as the Judge, for a Publick Good. We desire it, because we have by no ill action forfeited that Liberty to the Justice of the Laws of God and Men, as all these pleaders to Toleration are well known to have done, which is the Reason why they are abridged, even lest they should hurt themselves and others with it, as they have done heretofore. So that till our Considerer proves, That all that desire Toleration, would as freely and readily give it as receive it, were they in settled power; I see nothing moving in his Consideration towards Toleration, or the Justice of it. And if they will but stay for the obtaining of it, till they would, if they were in the same Circumstances with the Church-Prottestants, grant it, some hopes they may have, and some Justice in their Plea: But when it was their turn, of all others the Church Prottestants were esteemed most intolerable: nor could they obtain the least favour from Fines, Imprisonments, Sequestrations and Ruin. Is not *Adonibezek's* case worth considering, as well as this Consideration? especially since in the day of their Power, they did not only cut off the Thumbs and Toes, but the Head: Whereas the Government in return, only ties up their Hands from bringing the Knot upon their own Necks.

The Fourth Consideration is not only frivolous, as to matter of Argument, but of dangerous consequence: For if Toleration, as Mr. Baxter says, be a Shop of Poison, it is a very inhumane Complement to say, *Pray take a lick of which pot you please,*

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please, and much good may it do you. I believe our Considerer would take it in this case for a far more obliging civility, to be denied than gratified, if his curiosity should hanker after a taste of the dangerous entertainment; and the way to be *courteous* in his sense, is so far from being *pitiful*, that it is to be *cruel*. But let this pass as a complement fit for the mouth of a considering Dissenter, in an high fit of courtesie.

And now for the Fifth; wherein he remembers us of the hot doings of Queen *Maries* days, and threatens us with the danger of the Wheel coming over again. I think he cannot give a more cogent Argument against Toleration, nor a fairer warning to us to have care of our selves, and put a spoke in the Wheel, and endeavour to prevent the hot doings which assuredly Toleration is the most ready and effectual method to bring upon us. We have been under the Wheel of Toleration in King *Charles* the First's time, and have had our bones crushed with its weight. We had almost come under it again in King *Charles* the Second's time: Toleration had so set the Wheel a-going, that it had much ado to be stopt. And must we now lay our shoulders to it also, and whip on the furious Team by Toleration? It is kindly done however of our Considerer, to re-mind us of our danger: And if he have no better, or more moving Arguments for Toleration, I believe he will not move the Wheel much, unless it be upon the Neck of himself and party.

But let us hear his Sixth: *Conforming and Nonconforming Protestants and Papists agree in the main:*

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why should they not all be tolerated? Now either this Considerer is a Nonconforming Protestant, or a Papist. If a Non-Con, how comes he to advocate for Popery, which they all pretend to detest, to that degree, as Idolatrous and Antichristian, as upon that very Foot to lay the Foundation of the Quarrel against the Church Protestants, as Papists in Masquerade? If he be a Papist, it is a very fine piece of business, to see these mortal Enemies of a sudden reconciled, and come to such fair terms among themselves, when they pretend such a mortal hatred. Certainly a Crucifix must be the end, when Herod and Pilate are made Friends: I confess, I think a Papist hath as fair a Right to Toleration as the rest of the Pretenders, and that is just none at all. For if all these agree in the main, One God, One Faith, One Baptism, yet there are a thousand other things wherein they disagree, which are incompatible, not only with true Religion, but with the Peace of the Civil Government. But to see now how the world is amended with our Dissenters. The Church of England is intolerable and Antichristian, because it comes so near the Papists. The Papists themselves deserve Toleration, because they believe one God, &c. So that here's hot and cold out of the same mouth. Certainly this is a very moving Argument to Protestants especially. And if for the sake of some fundamental Truths, all Errors that are held with those Truths must be tolerated, let us build Mosques for the Turks: for they believe one God, and Synagogues for the Jews, who believe all the Old Testament. Let us tolerate the Scythian Arians, who believe all

our Presbyterians believe, and call themselves, *The Kirk*, and yet certainly are such a pestilent Race of men, as they are the very scandal of Religion, and shame of Humanity; and a dreadful instance to what heights Toleration may be improved, even to the Ruine of Humane society, and turning Religion into the most Diabolical and Impious Barbarity, such as with whom there is not only no coming together in the same Church, but no living with safety together with them in the same Land: And should the Lamb lie down with these Wolves, or the Kids with these Leopards, unless they change Principles, I fear both the Lamb and the Kid would scarce arise again alive in the Morning. Nor is it like, that Toleration should ever fulfil that glorious Prophecy which the *considerator* applies to very little purpose to it.

As to the Seventh, concerning the *French Protestants*, it comes not at all home to our case; had the *French Monarchy* been ruined by them; had the Government been laid in Blood, Ashes and Confusion: I know no body could have blamed the *French King* for endeavouring to secure himself against such practices for the future; it is but *Iſus Piſcator ſapit*, making use of the wisdom a man hath paid dearly for. Nor can any mortal man give any colourable reason why our Kings, Parliaments, Laws and Government, should not endeavour to secure themselves from such mischiefs as they have formerly felt, and have but too much reason to fear from men of the same restless tempers, and pernicious Principles. And possibly the terror of the *Revolutions* which have happened to his near Neigh.

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Neighbours, may have alarm'd the *French* Monarch to endeavour by an early precaution to prevent the like at home for the future; and if *French* Protestants are prosecuted, they may in a great measure thank the *English* Dissenters for it, for persecuting their Kings, and raising such disturbances in the Government, as they have so often done: Nor if we blame him, do we judg our selves by doing the same thing. For the Government of *England* restrains the Dissenters for former guilt, as well as future fear; and if the *French* King did the same, no person could blame him.

The Eighth Consideration is a meer falacy, an argument from a particular to an universal. Nor would Toleration have that influence as to encourage Trade, but the contrary; Wise men and Good men would be in suspense and fear of Changes and Revolutions, the greatest damps of Trade and Industry: Nor did any thing appear ever more clearly, than by the experiment made by the last Indulgence; for the Trade of the Nation hath never been so low, never Money more scarce, never Commodities more cheap, than since, and in the time of that Toleration, and the Turbulent consequences which attended it. And what if Three or Four sullen Clothiers would have packed up their Auls, and shut up their little Exchequer, must that needs prove the unavoidable necessity of satisfying their peevish humour by a Toleration? In very good time. And what if that would not have contented them in another peevish fit, but they must have had Establishment, and so on to the end of the Chapter,

Chapter, must they still have been pleased, or all undone? Now in my mind, the Gentleman who used to gratify a froward Boy with every thing he desired, for fear forsooth he should cry himself to death, found out a better expedient; for the Boy at last finding every thing yielded, cried for the Moon, Oh the Moon, the Moon; nothing else would serve him to play with but the Moon; a good Rod well applyed cured his longing and his crying for both the Moon or any other extravagant Toys. I doubt not but had those Zealous Clothiers made a step into the other world, it had been easy to have found out those who without a Toleration, would have been content to drive on so advantageous a Trade, and the Families who depended on them, would have taken Money from others to buy Bread, though it had not had the least smell of Toleration about it. Let the Dissenters leave trading when they please, there are honest men enough to fill up the gap; but let no man fear they will ever quit that part of Godliness which hath gain at the bottom: Whether they have Toleration, or whether they be refused it, Trade will go on, and if they will not, others will.

The Ninth consideration is indeed a notable one; The Considerer puts the King in mind of his own promise to imitate the Clemency of his Royal Brother, and of his Brothers promises from *Breda*: So that he would have the World believe he hath the word of Two Kings for it, and in truth that were a moving consideration indeed. But to do him Right, he hath undone the
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the consideration by quoting the late Kings Declaration too faithfully, a fault his Party are not usually guilty of. For it is plain in both the quotations of the Declaration of Breda, April, 1660, and that of October 1660, That the Kings promise was conditional, *that no man should be disquieted or called in question for differences in Opinion in matter of Religion, which do not disturb the Peace of the Kingdom.* So that if their opinions in matters of Religion were disturbing of the Peace of the Kingdom, the Kings promise did not extend to them. Now let any man see which of the Laws against which they complain, are enacted upon any other foot, than as they are disturbers of the Peace of the Kingdom. So that of consequence his present Majesty being under no greater obligation of his Royal word, in following his Brethers Example in point of Clemency, he will not think himself obliged to indulge their opinions in Religion, except those which do not disturb the peace of the Kingdom: And this will not untie the knot of one Law, since the Laws, as before was said, only animadvert upon them for their disturbing and endangering the Peace of the Kingdom. Well, but, at the last, he tells us the late King granted Indulgence and Toleration by his Declaration, March, 1672. And what then? Sure the Dissenters were wonderful grateful, dutiful, and kind upon it? Yes I warrant you, the Ministers brought him thanks from several Counties for this his Declaration, fit to be recorded: but — Pity it is, any thing like Dissenters Gratitude should be lost for want of being recorded.

But

But *quid verba audiam cum facta video?*
Fair Words and foul Deeds, they quickly
paid him in another Coin, and the Toleration
having given them leave to Train and
Muste, they soon gave him occasion to re-
pent his favour; Now City and Country
begins to ring with Fears of Popery and Ar-
bitrary Government. The Parliament are
Pensioners, and must be Dissolved; and
what influence these Tolerationers had up-
on succeeding Elections, and what ex-
cellent Men they sent to Represent the
Commons, let the Votes, the Addresses,
the Petitions, and at last the Rye-House
Conspiracy tell the World; they are so
fresh yet and so well known, and particu-
larly to his present Majesty in the Bill of
Exclusion, that I wonder the considera-
tion did not adde that as another Ar-
gument moving to Toleration: truly it
might as well have been urged as the
other Ten, for any thing of moment I can
see in them; especially this last, which can
onely serve to reflect upon what Merits
they can pretend to challenge this King
with his own and his Brothers Promise.

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Let

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Let us first try how they will behave themselves peaceably without disturbing the Government for Forty or Fifty years and then let them claim the benefit of the Promises, which are onely limited to that Condition.

We have now onely our Authors last consideration, which brings up the Rere, as *Argumentum ab Authoritate*: And which amounts to this, That several great Churchmen are of Opinion, *That Religion is not to be propagated with Sanguinary Laws, nor Heresies punished by Fire and Faggot.* And herein I know no body will contradict either him or his Authorities. The Churches Sword draws no Blood, the Sword of our Law draws no Blood purely for Religion. Is not the Law *de Heretico comburendo* repealed? What then is this to the purpose. Men are not to loose their Lives for their Religion, or different Opinions in what they call Religion, *Ergo* they are to be Tolerated. Men are not to be hanged by our Laws for Perjury, *Ergo* Perjury, ought to be allowed: is not this an admirable consequence. But if he means men are not in any way to be punished

nished for their Religious Opinions, he hath given us no authority ; for that the Imperial Edicts set many pecuniary Mulcts upon Dissenters in former times, and brought many straglers to the Church by moderate Fines, so that there is *Argumentum ab Autoritate* for Fines : But what is this to our case ? Men are not to loose their Lives for Religion, therefore not for Sedition nor Rebellion neither. It is for these that any of the Dissenters have ever lost their Lives, and if they will make Rebellion, Conspiracy, Treason, and Sedition, a part of their Consciencious Religion ; I hope the Church may use her Arms, of Tears and Prayers, as in her Litany, from all Privy Conspiracy, &c. *Good Lord deliver us* ; and I hope the Temporal Magistrate may use the Liberty of his Conscience in inflicting the Penalties of the Laws upon such pretenders to Religion, as turn Faith into Faction, and overturn Governments, Murder Princes, Usurp Thrones, kill and slay all that oppose them for Conscience sake. It is for disturbing the Peace of the Kingdom if they are Fined, Imprisoned, or any ways Punished : It is not for their having a Conscience, but for having no

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Conscience, for making no Conscience of disobeying the King, and His Ministers, the Laws, and the Government.

I Reverence the Memory of King *Charles* the First, whom the Tolerations made a Martyr, *Who would not have men who differ onely about the Skirts and Subburbs of Religion punished*; but if they strike at the Heart, the Metropolis, both of Religion and Government, I believe the safest Advice was what he gave His Son, our late Sovereign, *To Forgive them but never Trust them*: No not so much as with the dangerous Edge-tool of Toleration.

I have but two or three words to adde, which I would have considered as Arguments moving against Toleration.

First, It is not possible that any Dissenter would have all Opinions that call themselves Religion Tolerated. For then the Religion of *Mahometans*, *Jews* who deny Christ, Idolaters who Worship the Sun and Moon, who may Sacrifice their Sons and Daughters to Devils, will put in for a share:

Therefore *secondly*, Such onely as are Tolerable must be Tolerated, and others which hold

hold any thing Impious or Damnable, must be excluded from the benefit of Toleration.

And then *thirdly*, All the Dissenters in *England, Scotland, and Ireland*, ought first to agree, who among them are Tolerable and who are not.

That they may do this, they must examine not onely their own Opinions, but the Opinions of each party wherein they differ one from another, which of those are Tolerable, which Intolerable.

When this is done, every Sect must resolve to lay aside that Opinion which in the Judgment of the rest is Ill, False, and Intolerable; that so they may bring none but Tolerable Opinions to be Tolerated; that is, that the Government may not be obliged to Tolerate any Opinion, but what they themselves shall judge to be good, and fit to be Tolerated.

And when once they have brought this matter to an issue, and are agreed among themselves, then they may expect to be gratified with Toleration: For it would be unreasonable to grant a thing, till they are agreed what it is they would have; nor can the

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the Government till they tell what it is that they desire, or what it grants. And till they come to this perfect Union among themselves, What is fit to be tolerated, and what not, 'tis but reasonable they should cease importuning the Government for a general Toleration; which if granted, must be contrary to the Desires and Meanings of most, if not all, the several Dissenters. And to say the truth, without these Restrictions, a general Toleration must even, in the Opinion of all Dissenters, be unlawful and wicked, since otherwise it must Tolerate such Opinions as in their Judgment are unlawful, wicked, and damnable, as all those which under these notions are rejected by every several Sect are in their Opinion. As for example, a Presbyterian thinks many Doctrines of a Quaker unlawful and damnable errors; a Quaker thinks the same of a Presbyterian. Now should a Presbyterian desire that so he might be Tolerated, that all the Opinions of Quakerism should be Tolerated too, he would in his own Judgment desire that which he thinks sinful and erroneous to be Tolerated. And he that should think Sin and Error may lawfully

fully be Tolerated and propagated as true Religion, can stop no where, but must confess all Sins and Errours may be tolerated, which is a plain subversion of all manner of Religion, and the rooting out Christianity out of the World. So that the Quaker must be content to have only so much of his Opinion Tolerated as the Presbyterian, the Independent, Baptist, Antinomian, &c. shall think un-finful and lawful; the Presbyterian must quit what the others think finful and unlawful in his Opinions, and so of the rest, or else they must all confess themselves wicked and Hypocrites, who for their own satisfaction, can be content to have Sin in others Tolerated, and their Souls hardned in Errour, and eternally damned for obstinately and impenitently persisting in them. For if they do not think something finful and unlawful in each others Opinions and Practice, all Quakers must be Presbyterians, all Presbyterians must be Quakers; and they must all believe that a man may be saved in any of those Perswasions; and then why do they not Unite and come all into one Name, one Body, and one way of Worship? Why do they not promiscu-
ously;

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ously joyn in Communion? Why do they Separate, Divide, and Sub-divide, into so many distinct Churches, as they call themselves, and every one appropriate Election to their little Flock, awarding Reprobation to all that do not joyn with them?

Now let them but seriously consider of this matter, and they will find so little Moment in these Ten Considerations moving to Toleration, that they will find a Regulated Toleration, free from Errours in so many opposite Opinions, wholly impracticable and impossible: And an unregulated promiscuous Toleration of all Errours, for the sake of some Truths, which all may pretend to hold and believe, to be even in their own Opinions Impious, Sinful, and Damnable.

F I N I S.

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